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Neglect of the Minor Prophets.—The question was recently asked in one of our religious weeklies, Why has the study of the Minor Prophets been so largely discontinued? The writer protested, briefly but ably, against the prevailing neglect of these magnificent productions.

There are, doubtless, several reasons which might be assigned for the lack of interest manifested in these writers. One item is worthy of mention in this connection.

The Minor Prophets share with the Greater Prophets that neglect which arises from a lack of interest in the study of prophecy itself. So many of the students of prophecy have brought it into ridicule by their absurdities, that ordinary readers prefer to study other portions of the Sacred Word. This feeling is a growing one. The reader of a prophetic book is met at every verse with the most widely conflicting views. Difficulties are seemingly settled; but they rise again even more conspicuously than before. They will not stay down. This theory of fulfillment clashes with that theory. Facts and fancies are intermingled, and the reader gives up, in despair of ever unravelling the mysteries which abound on every page. The real difficulty in the case is that readers imagine prophecy and prediction to be identical. They forget that prediction is but one element, and that not the essential element, of prophecy. If they would but remember that the prophets were the preachers of their times, and that prophecy was the preaching; if they would but consent to read the words of the prophets as words uttered to the people of their own times and not suppose that the prophet had in mind the people of the nineteenth century, we believe that they would have a far better understanding of these words. There is a sense in which these utterances hold good for all times, but to think that they were primarily directed to the people of our times is a mistake, and to this false idea, consciously or unconsciously entertained by Bible students, may in part be attributed the apathy which exists so widely in reference to the prophetic portions of God's Word.

Light on the Old Testament.—It is only natural that a book, the product of antiquity, should be affected by the discoveries which are being made from time to time in those ancient countries, with which that book had more or less to do. "Our age," as Prof. Gast has recently written, "looking into the past scrutinizes everything that meets its gaze, requiring it to give a clear and consistent account of itself. It suffers no mere tradition to pass unchallenged. It allows no historic reality to that which cannot stand the test of a rigid examination according to the laws of historical evidence. It relegates into the realms of poetry, myth and legend, much of what has hitherto passed as indubitable history. And however painful it may be to see ruthlessly swept away the pleasant stories our fathers before us, or even ourselves in early youth, never dreamed of questioning, there is this compensation, that whatever is left may be relied upon as resting on a solid basis of fact." What has this spirit of critical inquiry, before which all antiquity has been summoned to appear, done for the Old Testament? Different answers will be given this question, according to one's point of view, or, more explicitly, according to the decision at which one has arrived after a careful consideration of the claims of criticism as announced by critics. The answer to this question, in detail, can be given only by one who has examined in detail the data on the basis of which the claims of critics are made. It is in place here merely to indicate a few general points:

1) The Bible student of a quarter of a century ago little dreamed of the light which within so short a time was to be shed upon the pages of the Old Testament, as the result of historical investigations. Egypt has been opened up, and everywhere are to be found customs, and allusions, and historical facts, not only illustrating but also substantiating the biblical record which deals with those periods in Israel's history, during which there was contact with Egypt. One needs but to read Brugsch Bey's *History of Egypt under the Pharaohs* to see how the spirit of historical inquiry has been rewarded.

From Assyria there has come a mass of material to evidence the historical accuracy of the sacred writings. It is difficult to decide here whether more help has been obtained in the way of evidence or of illustration. Even the account of the Creation, and the history of the Deluge are confirmed by parallel Assyrian accounts. Israelitish kings are named and their actions recorded. Hebrew words hitherto baffling the skill of the lexicographer, are now made clear. Light from this source has but begun to shine, and yet how much darkness has already passed away. And now we read of the wonderful empire of the Hittites, the very existence of which has been denied, while the Bible, because it so frequently made reference to it, was discredited. In these, as well as in other, directions the Bible has been the gainer by critical research.

2) To have shown the falsity of a wrong interpretation is to be counted as only less important than to have pointed out the right interpretation. To have caused the rejection of false principles of interpretation is as valuable a work as to have discovered correct principles. To have forever silenced a theory of inspiration (the verbal theory) which has proved a stumbling-block to all who ever held it, is to have done valiant service for the cause of truth. To have shown the only method by which an acceptable theory of inspiration may ever be worked out is only preparatory to working out that theory. Now, the critical spirit of our times has shown up a multitude of erroneous interpretations, many of them vital; it has thrown aside those old methods of interpretation and established the historicocritical method; it has clearly proven that the theory of inspiration which is hereafter to be adopted is an inductive theory,—a theory based on the facts in the case, and not ignoring them. Who can estimate the value of all this for those who are to follow us?

3) This critical spirit has perhaps overreached itself; but this was to have been expected. It must go too far, in order to bring its followers far enough. Much that is claimed to be the result of historical inquiry is, of course, error. This, however, time will sift. It is generally easier to pull down than to build up; yet a careful estimate will show the truth of the assertion that historical inquiry has done much more to build up than it has done to pull down the Old Testament. A large amount of outside rubbish has been cleared away. Even the inner part has been somewhat rearranged. But the result of it all has been to restore it to its original form, to throw upon it the clear, strong light of truth, to present it as God originally gave it, and as he intended we should have it.